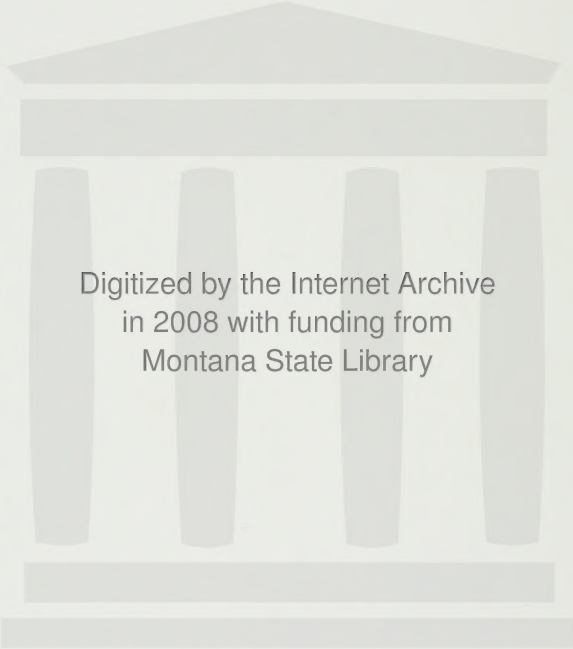


Montana State Library

This cover sheet created by Internet Archive for formatting.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Montana State Library

3
328.05
L131
V.10 NO.19

Montana Legislative Council

Publication of

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

DEC

Montana State Library



3 0864 1004 4140 4

MONTANA
1515

HELENA, MONTANA 59620

THE INTERIM

DECEMBER 1996 HELENA, MONTANA VOL. X NO. 19

WITH
PERIODICALS

REVENUE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Committee Adopts Preliminary Revenue Estimates...The Revenue Oversight Committee is required to estimate the amount of revenue available for legislative appropriation from the general fund and to introduce a House Joint Resolution setting forth those estimates. The estimates contained in the resolution must be used by all state agencies for budget purposes, including the preparation of fiscal notes.

At the Committee's December 2 meeting, Terry Johnson, Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD), presented recommendations on the economic assumptions that the Committee should adopt for the general fund revenue estimates. The revenue estimates derived from the LFD assumptions were \$64.7 million lower than the estimates prepared by the Governor's Budget Office for FY 1997 and for the 1999 biennium (FY 1998 and FY 1999). Johnson discussed the revenue sources in which the LFD estimates were substantially below the Budget Office estimates. Some of those sources include individual and corporate income taxes, long range bond excess (this amount is tied to the level of individual and corporate income taxes), inheritance tax, driver's license fees, statewide property taxes for school equalization (95 mills) and university funding (6 mills), and certain components of miscellaneous revenue.

The Committee adopted the LFD assumptions, with two minor exceptions. The Committee directed the LFD to use the Budget Office's higher growth rate in the taxable value of residential and commercial property to reduce the level of income tax credits claimed for taxes paid to other states. Steve Bender, Office of Budget and Program Planning, pointed out that the U.S. Congress had recently enacted legislation to prohibit a state from taxing pensions paid by the state to nonresidents.

PLEASE RETURN

The Budget Office assumed that the effect of the change in federal law would reduce the credit for taxes paid to other states by a significant amount. By incorporating these revised assumptions in his revenue estimating model, Johnson said that the difference between the LFD estimates and the Budget Office estimates would be reduced by \$1.2 million to \$6.3 million for the 3-year period.

Preliminary Estimates of Property Reappraisal Values...Mick Robinson, Director, Department of Revenue, presented preliminary estimates of the change in statewide taxable value due to the reappraisal of residential and commercial property (class four property). The estimates show that the statewide taxable valuation of class four property will increase from \$844.3 million in 1996 to \$1.27 billion in 1997, or by 43%. The change includes increases due to new construction and increases (or decreases) due to reappraisal of existing property. The Department is working to identify the amount of the increase associated with new construction and the amount associated with reappraisal. The estimates also show that every county in the state, except McCone County, will have an increase in taxable value. The largest percentage increases will occur in south central Montana (Gallatin, Park, and Sweet Grass counties) and in Granite and Sanders counties. The smallest percentage increases will occur in eastern Montana. Robinson told the Committee that the Department is still analyzing the data and final results could be different than the "rough estimates" contained in his report. He also said that values for individual properties will not be available until April or May 1997.

Under current law, most taxpayers would experience an increase in property taxes beginning in 1997. Robinson discussed three options that would mitigate higher property taxes. The first option would be to limit local taxing jurisdictions to raising no more revenue than they did in the current fiscal year. This approach would still result in a 24% average tax increase for class four property. Another option would be to reduce the 95-mill school equalization levies and the 6-mill university levy to generate the same amount of revenue from these levies. The statewide average percentage increase in property taxes would be 19% under this option. Property taxes paid on other classes of property would decrease by 9% under the first option and by 14% under the second option. The final option would be to reduce the class four property tax rate to exactly offset the statewide increase in market value. Although many property owners would still be subject to higher taxes, the major impact of this proposal would fall on local governments in which the increase in market value is below the statewide average.

Committee Approves Rail Car Bill...The Committee approved a bill draft for introduction in the 1997 legislative session to revise the definition of the average mill levy applied to rail car company property operating in the state. If enacted, the average mill levy applied to this property would be 95% of the average mill levy for commercial and industrial property. The

provision would codify the tax rate agreed to by the Department of Revenue and several railroad car companies under a recently signed tax agreement. The agreement resolved the dispute between the rail car companies and the Department for protested taxes and established the method of valuation of rail cars and tax rates through tax year 2002 (for prior coverage, see the May 1996, August 1996, and November 1996 issues of *THE INTERIM*). The Department is still negotiating with other railroad car companies not involved in the agreement.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

Committee Holds Final Meeting...The Committee on Public Employee Retirement Systems (CPERS) conducted its final meeting on November 7 and took action on 23 proposals submitted to the Committee for review prior to the 1997 legislative session. Some of the proposals have been requested as bill drafts and will be introduced. Others have not yet been requested as bills.

When a proposal reviewed by CPERS is introduced during the session, a CPERS committee report will be physically attached to the original copy of the bill. The CPERS report will include the following:

- a summary of the proposal as originally presented to the Committee;
- an issue summary;
- public policy considerations;
- the bill's affect on other retirement systems;
- fiscal implications; and
- CPERS' recommendation on whether the bill should be passed, amended, or not passed.

Some of the proposals that received a DO PASS recommendation from CPERS could result in significant policy changes.

Committee Considers MUS Proposal...A proposal forwarded by the Montana University System (MUS), but not yet requested as a bill draft, would expand the MUS's Optional Retirement Program (OPR) to cover

University classified employees who are now members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). The OPR is a defined contribution retirement plan where employees self-direct their investments through TIAA-CREF and within certain parameters set forth by the Board of Regents. The PERS, on the other hand, is a hybrid defined benefit plan. Thus, if introduced and passed by the Legislature, the proposal will have a significant impact on current and future classified staff of the MUS.

Committee Recommends New Retirement Plan...Another significant proposal that received a DO PASS recommendation is a directive that a new retirement plan be designed for employees currently covered by PERS. This plan, which could be a modification of the current PERS or a conversion to a new type of plan, would be implemented through legislation to be introduced during the 1997 legislative session. Among the objectives of the change would be to provide general public employees with more choice in directing their investments and to provide more benefit portability.

Other Proposals Recommended...In addition to the above two proposals, several others received DO PASS recommendations. Among them were the following:

- a 1.5% minimum Guaranteed Annual Benefit Adjustment for members of PERS, the Sheriff's, Game Wardens', Firefighters' Unified, Municipal Police Officers', Judges', and Highway Patrol Officers' Retirement Systems;
- a minimum biennial postretirement benefit adjustment for members of the Teachers' Retirement System; and
- expansion of the Game Wardens' Retirement System to include law enforcement and public safety personnel, such as motor vehicle inspectors, campus security officers, prison guards, etc., who are currently covered under PERS but who would like to be covered under a retirement plan designed for the needs of public safety workers.

For more information about these or other proposals reviewed by CPERS, please contact Sheri Heffelfinger, Legislative Services Division, 406-444-3064.

MONTANA SENTENCING COMMISSION

Sentencing Guidelines for Montana Require More Study...The Montana Sentencing Commission on Wednesday, November 27 voted to recommend

that the legislature not implement sentencing guidelines at this time. However, the Sentencing Commission will recommend to the 1997 Legislature that the Commission remain in existence for four primary purposes:

- to continue collecting data on criminal sentencing practices in Montana;
- to develop a system of voluntary sentencing guidelines for use on an experimental basis and assess the experimental guidelines;
- to review the current maximum and minimum penalties prescribed in the Montana criminal code, as well as the current sentencing policy and sentence ranges, and make recommendations to the 1999 Legislature for modifications to achieve a simpler, more understandable sentencing system; and
- to continue serving an educational function.

Commission Makes Recommendations...The Commission was also charged with making recommendations for implementing the public policy contained in the "Two-Strikes, Three-Strikes" law. Passed by the 1995 legislature, that law imposes mandatory life sentences for persons convicted of certain repeat violent crimes. The Commission will recommend to the Legislature that the policy behind the current "Two-Strikes, Three-Strikes" law be incorporated into existing laws for the treatment of repeat felony offenders. Those laws allow a person convicted of a second felony within five years of a prior conviction or release from prison to be sentenced to prison for up to 100 years. The Commission will recommend that offenders convicted of the violent crimes now listed in the "Two Strikes, Three Strikes" law automatically be considered for the expanded sentence, regardless of when their prior crime was committed. However, it would be up to the sentencing court to determine how long the actual sentence should be.

Commission Supports Eliminating "Good Time"...The Commission also voted to support the elimination of good time credits, which allow for early release of offenders. The 1995 Legislature eliminated good time effective January 31, 1997, and Commission members agreed that the elimination of good time should not be evaluated until the Legislature's action has had time to take effect. The Commission voted to support a move toward an earned incentive program for Montana's adult correctional facilities in conjunction with the elimination of good time credits. Under the earned incentive program, inmates receive rewards for good behavior within the prison, but do not reduce their prison sentence.

Commission Takes Other Action...In other action, the Commission agreed to urge the Montana Supreme Court to adopt a standard form for court judgments in criminal cases so that data on sentencing practices can be more easily collected.

Legislation incorporating the Commission's proposals will be prepared for presentation to the 1997 Legislature.

CAPITOL RESTORATION

Restoration to Continue Through Winter...Members of the Legislature will notice significant construction activities occurring in the Capitol during the upcoming legislative session. The original project phasing schedule contemplated virtual project shutdown during the session, but the contractor demonstrated he could provide significant economic efficiencies by working through the winter. The legislative leadership and the building occupants agreed to endure some disruption in order to achieve these savings. Every effort will be made to ensure that the work on the building does not interfere with the legislative process and the work of the building occupants, but flexibility and patience may occasionally be required.

Window Repairs Continue...The Capitol roof repairs are nearing completion, and work has begun in earnest this month on the repair and restoration of the original wood windows in the Capitol. The major third floor rooms will be completed prior to the legislative session, and the remainder of the old windows will be repaired in phases throughout the winter. The majestic rotunda entry doors are also being refinished. New wood windows in the center of the building will be installed as soon as weather permits in the spring.

New Sound Systems Installed...The installation of the new sound systems in the House Chambers and Room 312-2 is 90% complete with testing and training tentatively scheduled for the week of December 9. Major improvements have already been noted, and this installation should provide major benefits to the public as they attend meetings of the Legislature.

Space Planning Discussed...Planning continues for the interior work. Much of November was dedicated to space planning on the first and third floors. More details will be ready for discussion during the session, but it is hoped that this planning will significantly improve legislative hearing room space to the benefit of the public.

Debra Fulton at General Services, 406-444-3060, is available to answer your questions regarding this project. Please feel free to contact her with your questions or to request a project tour.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Legislative Information Available in Different Formats...From traditional printed formats to the latest electronic media, the Montana Legislature provides a wealth of information for its own management and for public use in following the process. Here is a summary of the information available to legislators and the public and how to get it. Complete information on legislative information is available from the Legislative Services Division or electronically.

Electronic Formats...There is a new State Bulletin Board system (as of Nov. 18, 1996). The Office of Public Instruction has taken over the administration of the state bulletin board. The new system uses "First Class" software. The BBS is available through computer modem to DOS users, Macintosh users, and Windows users.

Legislative information available on the Internet is increasing regularly. The Legislative Branch has a home page on the Internet at <<http://www.mt.gov/leg/branch/branch.htm>>. Plans are to provide Internet access to the same legislative information that is provided on the State Bulletin Board, including bill text and various legislative reports. As of this writing, a number of interim reports and other current legislative information can be found at the site.

Thanks to the work of the Natural Resources Information Service of the State Library, an interactive legislative district map is available that can be used to find the name and address of the senator and representative for a geographic area with a click of the mouse button.

The Montana Codes and 1995 session information are also available at this site.

"Traditional" Information Sources...Information available at the Data Distribution Office in the basement (Room 60) of the Capitol include:

Reports and publications at no charge:

- daily agenda (House and Senate calendar of bills scheduled for 2nd and 3rd reading);
- hearing calendar (list of bills scheduled for hearing today and the following two legislative days);

Bills, reports, and publications available at a nominal charge:

- copies of bills; and
- Cumulative Bill Status Report.

Several other reports, which are produced on a non-daily basis and are available at a minimal charge, include:

- Daily Journals;
- Index to Introduced Bills;
- Bill Draft Request List by Subject;
- Bill Draft Request List by Requestor;
- Bill Draft Request List by Requesting Agency;
- Code Sections Affected List; and
- Sponsor List of Introduced Bills.

Subscriptions to Legislative Proceedings...People may subscribe to the legislative proceedings for the 1997 session. There are four options available, and the price depends on whether the subscriber picks up the material at the Distribution Office or has the material mailed out.

<u>DAILY</u>	<u>PICK-UP</u>	<u>MAILED</u>
Complete set of proceedings:	\$700	\$930
Status sheets daily:	\$100	\$210
Status, journals, & index:	\$150	\$300
Status sheets mailed once a week:		\$ 60

"One complete set" means: One copy of each item of the proceedings of a session of the Legislature.

"Proceedings of the Legislature" means: status sheets, daily journals, reproduced bills, reproduced resolutions, printed bills, printed resolutions, and amendments, together with such other related documents as the Legislative Services Division may choose to include. (5-11-211, MCA)

Legislative Information Office...The Legislative Information Office located on the 3rd floor of the Capitol provides reports, publications, and information services to window customers and status of bills, hearing schedules, other legislative status information, and assistance in identifying

a bill based on a specific subject or sponsor to window customers and telephone callers.

Electronic Sources of Information...The State of Montana Bulletin Board System (BBS) is a valuable source of information for people with a computer. Essentially, an electronic copy of all information normally available in traditional printed form is also available through the BBS. This includes:

- Hearing Calendar -- a cumulative list of hearings scheduled for the next two weeks, sorted by date and by committee within date. Each time this document is stored, it replaces the previous hearing calendar on the BBS.
- Daily Introduced Bill List -- a daily, noncumulative list of bills introduced in a legislative day. A new document is stored on the BBS each day. Users can refer to the Bill Status Report for a cumulative list of all introduced bills.
- Cumulative Bill Status Report -- a list of the latest status of each bill and resolution introduced. Note that a bill sometimes has more than one action taken on it over the course of a day. This report shows only the latest action for each bill/resolution.

Reports are generated from the mainframe Bill Status system. Data on this system is entered online throughout the day. Thorough proofing of the current day's input is typically not completed until the following day and mistakes can occur.

- Index of Introduced Bills (updated daily) -- a cumulative index. It will be current (or nearly current) for all introduced bills when it is generated at the end of each day.
- Daily and Cumulative Bill Draft Request Lists -- listings of information on the bill requests received by the Legislative Services Division. Users can also refer to the Cumulative Bill Draft Request List to access information on earlier requests. The Cumulative Bill Draft Request List will typically be generated 5 times a week until late January, then less often as bill requests decrease.
- Text of Bills -- text of introduced and amended bills. Users of this information option are encouraged to do some initial planning. A user's manual contains basic instructions for users on how to efficiently access bill text and how to format downloaded text. Reference to page and line numbers from electronic copies are not reliable and cause confusion.

- House and Senate agendas -- daily agendas listing bills scheduled for 2nd and 3rd reading in the House and Senate.
- General information including a list of legislators and legislative committee assignments.
- House and Senate Daily Journals -- (must be proofed and approved before they are made available to the public -- normally a 10-day process.)
- Fiscal Note information (provided by Governor's Budget Office)
- Session Law -- bills and resolutions passed and finally approved as required

What information is available on the mainframe Bill Status system? What does it cost to access this information from my personal computer at home or office? What kind of equipment do I need? When is the service available and for how long?

A person with a computer, modem, and communications software properly set will be able to dial into the bill status system directly by calling 900-225-4300. The system will be accessible to the public for about seven months, until about the end of May, 1997. Users will be billed through a 900-number telephone charge of \$0.55 per minute. (Down from the 1995 charge of \$0.70 per minute.)

For information on equipment requirements and access, please download the Bill Status User's Guide from the State BBS, or call the Department of Administration's Customer Support Center at 406-444-2000.

Bill Status System...The mainframe bill status system is the central repository of information on everything that happens to a bill from its inception to its final disposition in the Legislature. The various summary reports available in printed form or electronically are derived from this system. Most users will find the information on the daily summaries adequate to their needs. Some users may want the up-to-the-minute information that direct access to mainframe online reports offer:

- Status of individual bills -- a brief description of a selected bill, its primary sponsor, and all actions taken on that bill.
- Legislator's bill list -- all bills for which a selected legislator is the primary sponsor.
- Committee's full hearing schedule -- all hearings scheduled for a selected committee for the current day and for all future dates.

- Today's full hearing schedule for all House and Senate committees -- the full hearing schedule for the House and Senate committees for a selected date.
- List of introduced bills for a specific subject -- all introduced bills related to one of 120 subjects selected.
- List of bill draft requests for a specific subject -- all unIntroduced bill draft requests related to a selected subject.
- Additional information on how to use the system -- instructions on how to use the system.

The Bill Status User's Guide is available for downloading from the State BBS. Printed copies of the guide can also be obtained from the Montana Legislative Services Division, 1-406-444-3064.

Library Sources... The Legislative Library (Room 102, State Capitol, 406-444-3598), the State Law Library (215 North Sanders, 406-444-3660), and the Historical Society Library & Archives (225 North Roberts, 406-444-4774) are primary sources for locating information related to past session activity.

Unique materials held at the Legislative Library include archival copies of the drafting record books from 1973 forward, interim committee work papers for the past 3 bienniums, and extra copies of some Legislative Services interim study final reports for distribution.

The Legislative Library, the State Law Library, and the Historical Society Library & Archives are good sources for much other legislative information. Original, signed bills and session laws are held by the Secretary of State's Office.

Messages... Legislators during the session receive mail under their name at Capitol Station, Helena, Montana 59620. Efforts should be made to keep this address from being used on any mailing lists as forwarding during the interim is a major problem.

Few legislators have their own telephone in the Capitol or have good telephone coverage if they do. A telephone message service is operated by the Legislative Information Office. Messages may be left by calling 1-406-444-4800. The same number is used for public information services and is often very busy. The service is available beginning January 6, 1997.

Messages by fax may be sent to legislators or committees at 1-900-225-1600 for \$0.70 per minute beginning January 6, 1997.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation

Joe Barnett, Chair
Sam Rose, Vice Chair Majority
Bill Ryan, Vice Chair Minority

Darrel Adams
Paul Bankhead
George Heavy Runner
Rick Jore
Gay Ann Masolo
Gerald Pease
Bob Story
Lila Taylor
Bill Whitehead

Peggy Arnott
Harriet Hayne
Joan Hurdle
Billie Krenzler
Doug Mood
Trudi Schmidt
Jay Stovall
Cliff Trexler

Appropriations

Tom Zook, Chair
Ed Grady, Vice Chair Majority
Joe Quilici, Vice Chair Minority

Beverly Barnhart
John Cobb
Gary Feland
John Johnson
Betty Lou Kasten
Matt McCann
Ray Peck
Bill Wiseman

Ernest Bergsagel
Roger DeBruycker
Don Holland
Royal Johnson
Bob Keenan
Red Menahan
Steve Vick

Business and Economic Development

Bruce Simon, Chair
Paul Sliter, Vice Chair Majority
Bob Pavlovich, Vice Chair Minority

Joe Barnett
Sylvia Bookout
David Ewer
Billie Krenzler
Rod Marshall
Wes Prouse
Jay Stovall
Joë Tropila

Rod Bitney
Charles Devaney
Kim Gillan
Bob Lawson
Gay Ann Masolo
Carolyn Squires
Cliff Trexler
Carley Tuss

Education and Cultural Resources

Alvin Ellis, Jr., Chair
Peggy Arnott, Vice Chair Majority
Dan Harrington, Vice Chair Minority

Paul Bankhead
Kim Gillan
George Heavy Runner
Bob Lawson
Linda McCulloch
Bill Rehbein
Dick Simpkins
Allan Walters

Matt Denny
Toni Hagener
Sam Kitzenberg
Gay Ann Masolo
Norm Mills
Sam Rose
Joe Tropila

Ethics

Sonny Hanson, Chair
Deb Kottel, Vice Chair

Chris Ahner
Toni Hagener
Joe Quilici

John Bohlinger
Ray Peck
Tom Zook

Fish and Game

Doug Wagner, Chair
Bill Rehbein, Vice Chair Majority
Emily Swanson, Vice Chair Minority

Haley Beaudry
Hal Harper
Dick Knox
Brad Molnar
Bob Raney
Diane Sands
Bill Tash
Jack Wells

Marian Hanson
Chase Hibbard
Rod Marshall
Bob Pavlovich
Bob Ream
Paul Sliter
Allan Walters

Highways and Transportation

Shiell Anderson, Chair
Rick Jore, Vice Chair Majority
Pat Galvin, Vice Chair Minority

Joe Barnett
Sylvia Bookout
Bob Clark

Rod Bitney
Matt Brainard
Charles Devaney

David Ewer
Marian Hanson
Gerald Pease
Dorothy Simpson
Bill Whitehead

Sonny Hanson
Rod Marshall
Bill Ryan
Jack Wells

Human Services and Aging

Duane Grimes, Chair
Loren Soft, Vice Chair Majority
Carolyn Squires, Vice Chair Minority

Darrel Adams
Ellen Bergman
John Bohlinger
Tim Dowell
Billie Krenzler
Wes Prouse
Bruce Simon

Chris Ahner
Bill Boharski
Bill Carey
Deb Kottel
Brad Molnar
Diane Sands
Liz Smith

Judiciary

Bob Clark, Chair
Dan McGee, Vice Chair Majority
Diana Wyatt, Vice Chair Minority

Chris Ahner
Ellen Bergman
Aubyn Curtiss
Duane Grimes
Joan Hurdle
Linda McCulloch
Gerald Pease
Liz Smith
Bill Tash

Shiell Anderson
Bill Boharski
Jon Ellingson
Sonny Hanson
Deb Kottel
Brad Molnar
Diane Sands
Loren Soft

Legislative Administration

Harriet Hayne, Chair
Vicki Cocchiarella, Vice Chair

Pat Galvin
Marian Hanson
John Mercer

Larry Grinde
Red Menahan

Local Government

Norm Mills, Chair
Chris Ahner, Vice Chair Majority
David Ewer, Vice Chair Minority

Ellen Bergman
Matt Brainard
Matt Denny
Tim Dowell
Toni Hagener
Deb Kottel
Linda McCulloch
Wes Prouse
Loren Soft

Sylvia Bookout
Bill Carey
Charles Devaney
Jon Ellingson
Sam Kitzenberg
Bob Lawson
Dan McGee
Liz Smith

Natural Resources

Dick Knox, Chair
Bill Tash, Vice Chair Majority
Hal Harper, Vice Chair Minority

Haley Beaudry
Jon Ellingson
Karl Ohs
Bob Raney
Bob Story
Emily Swanson
Cliff Trexler
Doug Wagner

Aubyn Curtiss
Doug Mood
Scott Orr
Trudi Schmidt
Jay Stovall
Lila Taylor
Carley Tuss

Rules

Larry Grinde, Chair
Marian Hanson, Vice Chair Majority
Vicki Cocchiarella, Vice Chair Minority

Shiell Anderson
Tim Dowell
Dan Harrington
John Mercer
Scott Orr
Bob Ream

Ernest Bergsagel
Sonny Hanson
Harriet Hayne
Karl Ohs
Joe Quilici

Select Committee on Corrections

Ernest Bergsagel, Chair
Red Menahan, Vice Chair

Gary Feland
Betty Lou Kasten
Dan McGee
Diana Wyatt

Royal Johnson
Matt McCann
Steve Vick

State Administration

Matt Denny, Chair
Matt Brainard, Vice Chair Majority
Toni Hagener, Vice Chair Minority

Darrel Adams
Tim Dowell
George Heavy Runner
Norm Mills
Bill Rehbein
Dorothy Simpson
Bill Whitehead

Haley Beaudry
Harriet Hayne
Sam Kitzenberg
Doug Mood
Trudi Schmidt
Allan Walters

State/Federal Relations

Aubyn Curtiss, Chair
Matt Brainard, Vice Chair Majority
George Heavy Runner, Vice Chair Minority

Haley Beaudry
Kim Gillan
Ray Peck
Sam Rose

Rod Bitney
Dan McGee
Bob Ream
Jay Stovall

Taxation

Chase Hibbard, Chair
Bob Story, Vice Chair Majority
Bob Ream, Vice Chair Minority

Peggy Arnott
John Bohlinger
Alvin Ellis, Jr.
Hal Harper
Rick Jore
Bob Raney
Bill Ryan
Emily Swanson
Jack Wells

Paul Bankhead
Bill Carey
Marian Hanson
Dan Harrington
Scott Orr
Sam Rose
Dick Simpkins
Lila Taylor

SENATE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation**

Ken Mesaros, Chair

Ric Holden, Vice Chair

Tom Beck

Don Hargrove

Greg Jergeson

Linda Nelson

Gerry Devlin

Reiny Jabs

Walt McNutt

Bill Wilson

Bills and Journals

Ken Miller, Chair

Daryl Toews, Vice Chair

J.D. Lynch

Bill Wilson

Mike Sprague

Business and Industry

John Hertel, Chair

Steve Benedict, Vice Chair

Bill Crismore

Bea McCarthy

Casey Emerson

Debbie Shea

Committee on Committees

Tom Beck, Chair

Gerry Devlin, Vice Chair

Lorents Grosfield

Arnie Mohl

Don Hargrove

Education and Cultural Resources

Daryl Toews, Chair

Casey Emerson, Vice Chair

Steve Doherty

Bill Glaser

Loren Jenkins

Mike Sprague

Mignon Waterman

Del Gage

John Hertel

Debbie Shea

Spook Stang

Ethics

Al Bishop, Chair
Bruce Crippen, Vice Chair

Steve Doherty

Dorothy Eck

Finance and Claims

Chuck Swysgood, Chair
Tom Keating, Vice Chair

Larry Baer
Jim Burnett
Eve Franklin
Greg Jergeson
Dale Mahlum
Arnie Mohl
Mike Taylor
Mignon Waterman

Tom Beck
Chris Christiaens
Loren Jenkins
J.D. Lynch
Ken Miller
Linda Nelson
Daryl Toews

Fish and Game

Al Bishop, Chair
Loren Jenkins, Vice Chair

Vivian Brooke
Steve Doherty
Ken Mesaros
Mike Taylor

Bill Crismore
Bea McCarthy
Ken Miller
Daryl Toews

Highways and Transportation

Arnie Mohl, Chair
Mack Cole, Vice Chair

Larry Baer
John Hertel
Reiny Jabs
Linda Nelson

Bob Depratu
Ric Holden
Greg Jergeson
Spook Stang

Judiciary

Bruce Crippen, Chair
Lorents Grosfield, Vice Chair

Sue Bartlett

Steve Doherty

Sharon Estrada
Ric Holden
Walt McNutt

Mike Halligan
Reiny Jabs

Labor and Employment Relations

Tom Keating, Chair
Jim Burnett, Vice Chair

Sue Bartlett
Casey Emerson
Debbie Shea
Bill Wilson

Steve Benedict
Dale Mahlum
Fred Thomas

Legislative Administration

Mike Foster, Chair
Chuck Swysgood, Vice Chair

Sue Bartlett
Bruce Crippen

Tom Beck
J.D. Lynch

Local Government

Tom Beck, Chair
Mike Sprague, Vice Chair

Dorothy Eck
Bill Glaser
J.D. Lynch
Fred VanValkenburg

Sharon Estrada
Don Hargrove
Walt McNutt

Natural Resources

Lorents Grosfield, Chair
Bill Crismore, Vice Chair

Sue Bartlett
Mack Cole
Dale Mahlum
Ken Miller

Vivian Brooke
Tom Keating
Bea McCarthy
Mike Taylor

Public Health, Welfare, and Safety

Steve Benedict, Chair
Jim Burnett, Vice Chair

Larry Baer
Bob Depratu
Sharon Estrada
Fred Thomas

Chris Christiaens
Dorothy Eck
Eve Franklin

Rules

John Harp, Chair
Gary Aklestad, Vice Chair

Bruce Crippen
Eve Franklin
Lorents Grosfield
Chuck Swysgood

Tom Beck
Mike Foster
Mike Halligan
Fred VanValkenburg

State Administration

Don Hargrove, Chair
Ken Mesaros, Vice Chair

Vivian Brooke
Fred Thomas

Del Gage
Bill Wilson

Taxation

Gerry Devlin, Chair
Mike Foster, Vice Chair

Mack Cole
Dorothy Eck
Mike Sprague
Fred VanValkenburg

Bob Depratu
Bill Glaser
Spook Stang

APPROPRIATIONS/FINANCE AND CLAIMS JOINT SUBCOMMITTEES

Education and Cultural Resources

Rep. Royal Johnson, Chair
Sen. Daryl Toews, Vice Chair

Rep. Don Holland
Sen. Ken Miller

Rep. Ray Peck
Sen. Greg Jergeson

General Government and Highways

Rep. Ed Grady, Chair

Sen. Loren Jenkins, Vice Chair

Rep. Bob Keenan

Sen. Dale Mahlum

Rep. Joe Quilici

Sen. Eve Franklin

Human Services and Aging

Rep. Betty Lou Kasten, Chair

Sen. Chuck Swysgood, Vice Chair

Rep. Beverly Barnhart

Sen. Jim Burnett

Rep. John Cobb

Sen. Mignon Waterman

Institutions and Cultural Education

Rep. Gary Feland, Chair

Sen. Arnie Mohl, Vice Chair

Rep. Red Menahan

Sen. Mike Taylor

Rep. Steve Vick

Sen. Chris Christiaens

Long Range Planning

Rep. Ernest Bergsagel, Chair

Sen. Tom Beck, Vice Chair

Rep. Matt McCann

Sen. J.D. Lynch

Rep. Tom Zook

Natural Resources

Rep. Roger DeBruycker, Chair

Sen. Tom Keating, Vice Chair

Rep. John Johnson

Sen. Larry Baer

Rep. Bill Wiseman

Sen. Linda Nelson

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Committee Meets in October and November...The Legislative Audit Committee met October 23-24 and November 21-22. The following reports were presented:

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDITS:

Commissioner of Political Practices (96-22)

This financial-compliance audit report contains the results of the audit of the Commissioner of Political Practices for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. There were two prior audit recommendations directed to the Commissioner's office. The Commissioner fully implemented both of the recommendations. This audit resulted in no recommendations. An unqualified opinion was issued on financial schedules contained in the report beginning on page A-5.

Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (96-23B)

This financial-compliance audit report contains the results of the audit of the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. There were eight prior audit recommendations directed to the school. Of these, six were implemented and two were partially implemented. Additional information concerning these recommendations is available on page 3 of the report document. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules contained in the audit report.

Montana Chiropractic Legal Panel (96-31)

A financial-compliance audit was performed for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. The Panel implemented both of the two recommendations contained in a prior audit report for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1994. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules. This audit report contains no recommendations.

Department of Public Service Regulation (96-28)

This audit report is the result of a financial-compliance audit of the Department of Public Service Regulation for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. The report contains three recommendations concerning compliance with state travel laws, collecting mandatory late fees of \$500 per day, and amending state law to regulate railroad transportation. Office management concurred with all recommendations. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules contained in the report. There were no prior audit recommendations.

Office of the Secretary of State (96-30)

This audit report is the result of a financial-compliance audit of the Office of the Secretary of State for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. The report contains three recommendations where the office could enhance compliance with state laws and policies.

The first recommendation discusses the need to develop a system to document that individual service fees charged to businesses and individuals are commensurate with costs of providing the service. The office could not provide support to document that the individual fees for each type of service were commensurate with the cost to perform the service as required by state law.

The second recommendation discusses the need to clarify section 2-6-103, MCA. The law currently requires the office to deposit into the general fund from the proprietary fund types, any revenue collected in the prior year in excess of the current year's appropriation. Beginning in fiscal year 1995-96, the office is not required to have appropriations for expenses in its proprietary funds. Since there is no current year appropriation in fiscal year 1995-96, the law could not be implemented.

The final recommendation discusses cash management and the need to continue to improve procedures to deposit receipts promptly in compliance with state law. This issue was the single prior audit recommendation directed to the office. The office partially implemented this recommendation.

Office management concurred with all recommendations. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules contained in the report.

State Auditor's Office (96-21)

This audit report is the result of a financial-compliance audit of the State Auditor's Office for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. The report contains three recommendations where the office could enhance compliance with state laws and policies.

The first recommendation addresses the improper abatement of insurance and securities examination expenditures. The report discusses understatements of amounts spent caused by a conflict between the language of the appropriation bill, which directs the office to abate the expenditures, and state law, which requires the accounting records of the state to be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

The second recommendation discusses the need to develop procedures to ensure excess revenue in the special revenue fund is transferred to the general fund as required by state law. The office could enhance compliance with the law by establishing formal policies to monitor the special revenue fund balance and make transfers on a timely basis.

The third recommendation discusses the need for legislation to clarify the legal status of the Reinsurance Board which administers the Montana Small Employer Health Reinsurance Program. This issue was a prior recommendation. In a prior audit report it was noted there is a conflict in the state laws regarding whether this program is a state program, to be administered as a state agency, or a nonprofit, nonstate entity.

Office management concurred with all recommendations.

Judicial Branch (96-27)

A financial-compliance audit of the Montana Judicial Branch was performed for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. Of the ten prior audit recommendations, the Judicial Branch implemented six recommendations, partially implemented one recommendation, and did not implement three recommendations. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules.

This audit report contains six recommendations to the branch, one recommendation to the Legislature, and one disclosure issue. The recommendations relate to recording complete financial information on the state's accounting records, compliance with federal regulations, working to obtain a funding source that allows sufficient contributions to the Judges' Retirement System, reviewing state laws to determine if they should be revised or repealed, and charging expenditures to the programs that receive the benefit. The disclosure issue relates to a prior audit recommendation and discusses a difference of opinion between the Legislative Audit Division and the Judicial Branch. The facts of the issue have been disclosed on page 19 of the audit report to bring attention to it and focus on developing a solution.

The audit revealed a provision of state law that allowed the Department of Corrections to use up to \$500,000 of taxes assessed and collected on motor vehicles to offset the need to request additional funding for youth court and foster care placements. Additional information regarding this issue is contained on page 16 of this report.

Judicial branch management concurred with four of the recommendations and the Supreme Court Clerk concurred with one additional recommendation.

Office of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor (96-24)

This financial-compliance audit report contains the results of the audit of the Office of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. The prior audit report contained one recommendation directed to the office, and it was fully implemented. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules contained in this report.

This report contains three recommendations. The recommendations relate to:

- establishing procedures to monitor the Governor's emergency appropriation to ensure its statutory limit is not exceeded;
- establishing controls over contingent revolving fund checking accounts; and
- properly classifying revenue and transfers on the state's accounting records in accordance with state accounting policy and law.

Board of Public Education (96-23A)

This financial-compliance audit report contains the results of an audit of the Board of Public Education for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. There was one prior audit recommendation directed to the Board. The board implemented this recommendation. This audit report contains no recommendations directed to the Board. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules contained in the audit report.

Montana Health Facility Authority (96-29)

This financial-compliance audit report contains the results of the audit for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. The previous audit report contained no recommendations to the Authority. The current audit report contains four issues. Two recommendations relate to the Authority's Direct Loan Program, established in fiscal year 1993-94. Under current statute, the Authority does not have specific authorization to operate the program. In addition, a portion of the Authority's fund balance funds the program which current statute does not specifically allow. The remaining two recommendations address the funding of the statutorily established capital reserve account and documentation procedures for fee reductions or waivers granted by the

Authority. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial statements contained in the report.

Montana Historical Society (96-25)

This financial-compliance audit report contains the results of the audit for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. The previous audit report contained one recommendation to the Society. The recommendation has been implemented. The current audit report contains two accounting issues regarding the improper recording of grant expenditures and expenditure abatements and one cash management issue regarding timely deposit of donations. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules contained in the report.

Department of Military Affairs (96-26)

This audit report is the result of a financial-compliance audit of the Department of Military Affairs for the two fiscal years ending June 30, 1996. The report contains three recommendations directed to the Department.

The first recommendation discusses the need for the Department to establish accounting and administrative procedures for consistent recording of financial activity and compliance with state laws and policies during declared disasters or emergencies. In fiscal years 1994-95 and 1995-96, the Department was involved in three declared disasters. Several instances were noted where the Department did not properly record financial activity or comply with state laws and policies.

The second recommendation relates to procedures used by the Department to draw funds for the Air and Army National Guard programs. Currently, on a monthly basis, the Department requests reimbursement from the United States Department of Defense for expenditures related to this program. To accommodate after-the-fact funding, the Department obtained a \$1.8 million loan from the general fund in fiscal year 1995-96. This resulted in lost interest to the general fund.

The final recommendation relates to proper recording of financial activity on the Statewide Budgeting and Accounting System (SBAS). Instances were noted where the Department did not record expenditures and revenue in accordance with state laws and policies. In addition, it was noted that the Department should deposit Veterans Affairs collections and restrictively endorse checks on a timely basis as required by state law and policies.

Department officials concur with all recommendations. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial schedules presented in this report.

FINANCIAL AUDIT:

Guaranteed Student Loan Program, Commissioner of Higher Education (96-6)

A financial audit of the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program was performed for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1996. This report contains the audited financial statements and accompanying notes for fiscal year 1996. An unqualified opinion was issued on the financial statements.

The current report does not contain any audit recommendations. The report does contain information relating to the changing federal student loan program environment. The prior report contained no audit recommendations.

PERFORMANCE AUDITS:

Food & Consumer Safety (FCSS), Department of Public Health & Human Services (96P-08)

The FCSS mission is to provide public health protection by delivering technical services, education and training, and enforcement through local health units to achieve consistency. The audit examined licensure and inspection activity associated with: food establishments, public accommodations, trailer courts, and swimming pool/spas. To increase training/education assistance to local health units and establishment operators, FCSS should: increase frequency of visits to counties, establish a video library, and utilize existing county training packages. To more effectively utilize limited sanitarian resources, health officials need to concentrate on the highest risk establishments/activities. The Department should seek to revise legislation for swimming pools and spas to require local sanitarians to support pool inspection requirements. FCSS should coordinate University System inspection requirements with local sanitarians. Since current license fees do not distinguish facility complexity, size, or risk, the Department, in conjunction with county health officials and industry, should develop a risk-based licensure approach to provide funding for public health priorities.

WICHE, WAMI, Minnesota Dental and Rural Physician Incentive Programs, Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana State University - Bozeman (96P-05)

This report contains information pertaining to the history and current status of the WICHE, WAMI, and Minnesota Dental and Rural Physician Incentive Programs. The report addresses the number of students funded, the professional occupations available, and a service/payback requirement.

The report contains one recommendation regarding the method used to determine which students are funded.

ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING AUDIT:

Information Processing Facility and Central Applications (96DP-06)

This electronic data processing audit reviewed general controls at the Department of Administration's central data processing center. The audit also reviewed application controls over the Statewide Budgeting and Accounting System (SBAS, State Payroll, and Warrant Writer systems). The audit concluded that overall general and application controls operated effectively during fiscal year 1995-96. The audit includes an overview of the Department's disaster recovery plan and recommendations to improve operating procedures for SBAS.

CONTRACTED AUDITS:

Montana State Lottery Financial Statements (96C-06)

An audit of the Montana State Lottery for the year ending June 30, 1996, was conducted by Olness and Associates, PC. The report contained no recommendations.

Montana State Lottery Report on Cash Drawings (96C-07)

An audit of the Montana State Lottery Observations for the year ending June 30, 1996, was conducted by Anderson, ZurMuehlen and Company, PC. The report contained no recommendations.

Analysis and Evaluation of Claims Processing and Payment Procedures (96C-09)

A special purpose audit of the Montana Employee Benefit Plan administered by the Department of Administration for the two fiscal years ending February 26, 1996, was conducted by the Segal Company and contained 10 recommendations.

COMMITTEE ON STATE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Administration Seeks Funding for Information Technology...Using the findings of the Committee on State Management Systems as a springboard, the executive budget will propose a \$55 million bonded program for information technology projects. The bonded program will finance the development and implementation of nine computer systems that will assist state and local governments, private industry, and the general public in meeting their needs for complete, timely, and accurate information. The program is built on the premise that information systems, like buildings, are assets of the state, and that it is appropriate to pay for these assets over their useful lives. Bond payments would be made with general fund, state special, federal special, proprietary fund revenues as well as private and Montana University System funds.

A key project in the bonded program is the Montana Project to Reengineer the Information Management Environment (MT PRIME). This \$16 million project would replace the state's aging legacy systems (Statewide Budgeting and Accounting System (SBAS), Personnel, Payroll and Position Control (PPP), and Property Accountability Management System (PAMS)) with an integrated and coordinated management information system. Other bonded projects include rewriting computer systems to permit consolidation of wage-based employer reporting, implementing a new income tax processing system, integrating automated property record systems, and creating a revenue and information processing center. The program also seeks funding for further automating the state's budget system, modernizing the unemployment insurance benefits payment system, building a statewide digitized property ownership database, and developing instructional computing, campus infrastructure, and administrative support systems for the Montana University System.

THE BACK PAGE

Two years ago, an article for the December 1994 *INTERIM* reported on the changes information technology was prompting in the library world. That article discussed the Legislative Branch's first experiments with the Internet and the World Wide Web. Since then, the increase in the pace of change has been astounding. Developments seemed rapid then; today it seems that the foundations of the work of easing access to information are shifting. This article will update the 1994 library technology review and discuss possible future improvements in staff and legislator access to useful, reliable information.

GETTING THE INFORMATION WE NEED: AN UPDATE ON TOOLS AND CHALLENGES

by Elizabeth Furbush, Legislative Librarian
Legislative Services Division

INTRODUCTION

Tools are changing, but the challenge of easing user connections to relevant, accurate, and current information remains. Many of the new tools provide access to overwhelming amounts of information, resulting in information overloads rather than informed decisionmaking. While getting to information may be easier, getting to useful information is as much of a problem as ever. A recent New Yorker cartoon shows an information shop offering "day-old information" and "slightly irregular information" at bargain basement prices. Obviously, the quality of information retrieved is crucial to its value. Searchers today need help with monitoring changes in information sources, using tools to filter the deluge of data, and evaluating search results.

The techniques presently used in the Legislative Branch to gather information are a dynamic mix of electronic, paper, and personal sources. In contrast to 1994, the Branch today utilizes direct connections to the Internet through the state network and also provides Montana citizens and other Internet users with an informative web site answering many of their questions about the work of the Branch. The following sections review some of the ways in which technology is currently easing the job of finding information and organizing it for access. The concluding section considers the possible relevance to the management of legislative work of

recent discussions in business literature regarding the need for formalizing "knowledge management".

FINDING AND OBTAINING INFORMATION

A great deal of the data used by the Branch still arrives in paper form through the mail from traditional sources--other Montana agencies, other states, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the federal government, various commercial services, etc. However, information providers are also taking advantage of the efficiencies and timeliness of electronic publication. Organizations such as NCSL are providing highly relevant and useful publications on their Internet web sites and are encouraging their clients to use materials published electronically. If such publications are well-designed and the target audience is trained and equipped to use them, this method can provide excellent service to the user at a lower cost to the publisher.

The federal government is at the forefront of this move toward cost savings through electronic publication. Driven by budgetary decisions, agencies are phasing out paper publication of many products in favor of providing electronic databases. This change results in challenges to the end user who does not always find it easy to decide which electronic products are truly current and which update previously published information series. Over the past year, legislative research staff have worked to familiarize themselves with the publication formats for U.S. Census information on the Internet to allow statistical work to be kept up to date. In exchange for the probable currency and availability of electronic publication, the user performs some of the publishing tasks and absorbs the time and materials costs of downloading and printing data in a usable format.

Many states' governments, including Montana's, are joining this trend toward electronic publication and are creating useful and rich reservoirs of information. For the foreseeable future, databases will be under constant refinement, so the researcher must maintain flexibility in search strategies. Note that access times are not negligible. Acquiring information can often require several minutes of waiting for connection and transmittal at each point in the process, resulting in a significant net cost in staff time, a cost that was not present in mail delivery. So when the question is not urgent, ordering a paper product may still be the best way to go. And the time savings provided by the organization and indexing of the information and the speedy access offered by commercial services, such as WESTLAW, LEXIS, and MONTLAW, means that these more traditional resources often are still our best choice for access to information.

It pays to remember that the high-tech road is not guaranteed to be the most efficient or effective or the least costly. Frequently, the best resource available is the telephone, which provides a direct connection to legislative staff in other states who can save hours of work by their personal understanding of issues and events not clearly explained in published materials.

LIBRARY REFERENCE SERVICES

Montana legislative researchers are developing extensive expertise in searching the Internet in their subject specialties, and many legislators are also becoming familiar with these resources. However, as with more traditional research sources, questions come up that are from areas outside the searcher's area of concentration or that require the use of unfamiliar resources. The Library staff works to keep references on hand to provide an overview of new and effective information sources and to help clients keep up with constantly changing resources. Particularly when time constraints on staff are significant, Library support staff takes on the sometimes time-consuming task of accessing and downloading files. Library staff also continues to provide reference assistance in accessing paper and electronic information on the Montana legislative process for Montana legislators as well as for Montana state government agencies, Montana citizens, and legislative agencies in other states.

For example, Library resources on subjects of concern to the 1997 Legislature, such as privatization, welfare reform, or corrections, include books, articles, "hot topic" files, newspaper clippings, periodical indexes, staff expertise references, national organization references, and databases of studies from other governmental bodies. Depending on the focus of the user's question and their placement within the client group, any or all of these resources might be used.

A great deal of work is being done in the public and private sectors on improving access to the plethora of data available through the Internet. One task for the Legislative Library staff in the next biennium will be the improvement of our system for pointers to internal and external electronic documents and sites useful to the work of the Branch. These pointers could be located on the legislative web site in order to better serve legislators and Montana citizens as well as on the internal network, ideally in the planned intranet environment. The Library will be moving further toward being a "virtual" library of easily accessible electronic publications, integrating techniques developed for automated help desks with the requirements of improving access to information content and of notifying staff and legislators of new works relevant to issues of current concern.

ORGANIZING INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR EFFECTIVE ACCESS

Once information has been retrieved, decisions need to be made as to whether it should be preserved for temporary or long-term reference and how to ensure that it will be easily available when required. Often with an electronic document reliably available on an established site (a WESTLAW document or U.S. General Accounting Office report for example) the best resource decision is to note the availability of the publication and its location in a subject index and simply retrieve it again when needed. However, if the document may be useful to a number of people or has been time-consuming to obtain, saving it temporarily for ready reference is preferable. If the resource is of permanent reference value or its source cannot be counted on to remain stable, the document is best saved electronically or on paper with indexing or full cataloging to track it.

For documents obtained from external sources, the Library's electronic catalogs will continue to point to paper documents, along with the increasingly common references to electronic documents and web sites. This system enables provision of an effective current awareness service through the creation of a subject index to material recently received. A new Branch Information Request System, built on an ORACLE database, will provide subject access to data obtained or generated in response to queries, even if items are not of enough permanent value to warrant formal cataloging. This system will also notably improve tracking of internally produced documents and staff research.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The Legislative Services Division invests money and staff time in locating, acquiring, and using information. Responsible use of state resources requires ensuring maximum value at the least cost from our investment in information. In addition to the new Information Request System, other ORACLE databases will allow improved tracking of staff expertise and training. The Branch can also create databases for external information resources and in our internal paper filing systems. These new options will be most effectively set up from a thorough understanding of the flow of information into and through the Branch systems.

Current business and technology literature frequently mentions "knowledge management". One explanation of the meaning of this term says "include all the . . . nuggets of 'knowledge' that exist in your firm. Select the most important, codify them and help people find them. That's knowledge management." The corporate world is recognizing the significant expense of information acquisition, creation, storage, and analysis, and many are thinking that increased productivity is possible if

the information pathways within an organization are clearly understood and open to all who can profit from them. In the Legislative Branch, staff that is working on different aspects of a common problem, such as privatization or corrections, can be much more efficient if they are sharing their resources and research. In the same way, the products resulting from the state's investment in an interim study or staff training need to remain a resource for future research to build on. Researchers need to avoid spending hours on a question when the answer or relevant data is in a file or publication or in a colleague's mind in an office a few steps away.

Better understanding of information pathways will also help to evaluate new information technology products. Electronic publications can save staff a great deal of time, but the costs of obtaining and providing access to electronic information can be significant, particularly when network technology staff time is needed to enable this access. A clear understanding and overview of the Branch's needs for information products makes informed purchasing decisions easier. Another example of new information products that require careful acquisitions review is the vast array of products currently being developed by the private sector for retrieving targeted information from the Internet. The Branch needs to know how it will use and share this information before it can effectively evaluate new options.

Moving into this new era, the library profession brings experience in the development of systems for organization of information for its productive use. Library staff will be working cooperatively with other information users and technical staff to develop and refine systems for information acquisition and processing. Within the Legislative Services Division, a group called the Information Policy Forum, consisting of Office Directors and other interested parties, has been meeting monthly to discuss these issues. Taking full advantage of opportunities will require information end users to work knowledgeably and cooperatively with the computer technical staff, first to better understand information pathways and storage policies in the Branch, and second to develop and maintain a system that meets our unique needs. Effective systems design can be made easier when there is input from content experts (researchers, lawyers, analysts, and auditors) and tool and infrastructure experts (information technology staff), combined with the bridging experience of library science.



INTERIM CALENDAR

UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED,
ALL ROOM DESIGNATIONS ARE IN THE CAPITOL

DECEMBER

December 13, Legislative Council, Room 108, 9 a.m.

December 19, Legislative Audit Committee, Room 108

December 25, Christmas, holiday

JANUARY

January 1, New Year's Day, holiday

January 6, 55th Legislature convenes, Noon

Legislative Services Division
Room 138, State Capitol
P.O. Box 201706
Helena MT 59620-1706

